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Sent 4-26-09

Claims 1-206 (canceled).

Claim ~~207~~<sup>1</sup> (previously presented): An isolated secreted polypeptide having aminopeptidase activity with physicochemical properties of (i) a pH optimum in the range of from about pH 7.27 to about pH 10.95 determined at ambient temperature in the presence of Ala-para-nitroanilide; (ii) a temperature stability of 90% or more, relative to initial activity, at pH 7.5 determined after incubation for 20 minutes at 60°C in the absence of substrate; (iii) a temperature stability of 64% or more, relative to initial activity, at pH 7.5 determined after incubation for 20 minutes at 70°C in the absence of substrate; and (iv) an ability to hydrolyze a substrate containing Ala, Arg, Asn, Asp, Cys, Gln, Glu, Gly, His, Ile, Leu, Lys, Phe, Pro, Ser, Thr, Trp, Tyr, or Val at its N-terminus, selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence which has at least 90% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2;

(b) a polypeptide which is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under medium stringency conditions with (i) the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1, or (ii) its full complementary strand, wherein medium stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 35% formamide; and

(c) a fragment of (a) or (b), wherein the fragment has aminopeptidase activity;

wherein the polypeptide having aminopeptidase activity sequentially removes one amino acid residue at a time from the N-terminus of a peptide, polypeptide, or protein.

Claim ~~208~~<sup>2</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~207~~<sup>1</sup>, comprising an amino acid sequence which has at least 90% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim ~~209~~<sup>3</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~208~~<sup>2</sup>, comprising an amino acid sequence which has at least 95% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim ~~210~~<sup>4</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~209~~<sup>3</sup>, comprising an amino acid sequence which has at least 97% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim ~~211~~<sup>5</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~207~~<sup>1</sup>, comprising the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2 or a fragment of contiguous amino acids of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2 wherein the fragment has aminopeptidase activity.

Claim ~~212~~<sup>6</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~208~~<sup>2</sup>, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

Claim ~~213~~<sup>7</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~212~~<sup>6</sup>, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

Claim ~~214~~<sup>8</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim 207, which is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under medium stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its full complementary strand, wherein medium stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 35% formamide.

Claim ~~215~~<sup>9</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~214~~<sup>8</sup>, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

Claim ~~216~~<sup>10</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~215~~<sup>9</sup>, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

Claim ~~217~~<sup>11</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~207~~<sup>1</sup>, which is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under high stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its full complementary strand, wherein high stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 50% formamide.

Claim ~~218~~<sup>12</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~217~~<sup>11</sup>, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

Claim ~~219~~<sup>13</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~218~~<sup>12</sup>, which is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

Claim ~~220~~<sup>14</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~207~~<sup>1</sup>, which is encoded by the nucleic acid sequence contained in plasmid pEJG18 which is contained in *E. coli* NRRL B-21677.

Claim ~~221~~<sup>15</sup> (previously presented): The polypeptide of claim ~~207~~<sup>1</sup>, wherein the polypeptide hydrolyzes a substrate containing Ala, Glu, Gly, or Pro at its N-terminus.

Claim <sup>16</sup>~~222~~ (currently amended): A method for producing the isolated secreted polypeptide of claim ~~207~~ comprising (a) cultivating a microbial strain, which in its wild-type form produces the polypeptide, in a medium under conditions suitable for production of the polypeptide; and (b) ~~recovering~~ isolating the polypeptide from the medium.

Claim <sup>17</sup>~~223~~ (currently amended): A composition comprising the isolated secreted polypeptide of claim ~~207~~ and a suitable carrier.

Claim <sup>18</sup>~~224~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim <sup>17</sup>~~223~~, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence which has at least 90% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim <sup>19</sup>~~225~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim <sup>18</sup>~~224~~, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence which has at least 95% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim <sup>20</sup>~~226~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim <sup>18</sup>~~225~~, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence which has at least 97% identity with the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim <sup>21</sup>~~227~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim <sup>17</sup>~~223~~, wherein the polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2 or a fragment of contiguous amino acids of amino acids 16 to 496 of SEQ ID NO:2 wherein the fragment has aminopeptidase activity.

Claim <sup>22</sup>~~228~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim <sup>21</sup>~~227~~, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

Claim <sup>23</sup>~~229~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim <sup>22</sup>~~228~~, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

Claim <sup>24</sup>~~230~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim <sup>17</sup>~~223~~, wherein the polypeptide is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under medium stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1, or its full complementary strand, wherein medium stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 35% formamide.

<sup>23</sup>  
Claim ~~231~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim ~~230~~<sup>24</sup>, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

<sup>24</sup>  
Claim ~~232~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim ~~231~~<sup>25</sup>, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

<sup>25</sup>  
Claim ~~233~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim ~~223~~<sup>17</sup>, wherein the polypeptide is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence which hybridizes under high stringency conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of nucleotides 46 to 1488 of SEQ ID NO:1, or its full complementary strand, wherein high stringency conditions are defined as prehybridization and hybridization at 42°C in 5X SSPE, 0.3% SDS, 200 µg/ml sheared and denatured salmon sperm DNA, and 50% formamide.

<sup>28</sup>  
Claim ~~234~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim ~~233~~<sup>27</sup>, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus* strain.

<sup>29</sup>  
Claim ~~235~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim ~~234~~<sup>28</sup>, wherein the polypeptide is obtained from an *Aspergillus oryzae* strain.

<sup>30</sup>  
Claim ~~236~~ (previously presented): The composition of claim ~~223~~<sup>17</sup>, wherein the polypeptide is encoded by the nucleic acid sequence contained in plasmid pEJG18 contained in *E. coli* NRRL B-21677.

Claims 237-240 (canceled).